

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 208 432

CS 503 600

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TITLE Communication Arts Courses in Faculties of Education:
What to Leave In and What to Take Out.
PUB DATE Jun 81
NOTE 21p.; Paper presented at the Meeting of the Canadian
Communication Association (Halifax, Nova Scotia,
Canada, June 1, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Audiovisual Aids; *Communication Skills; *Course
Content; Debate; Higher Education; *Speech
Communication; *Speech Curriculum; Speech
Instruction; *Speech Skills; *Teacher Education
Curriculum; Writing Skills

ABSTRACT

Providing both a rationale and a syllabus for a basic course in communication skills for college students training to be teachers, this paper explains why such elements as training in audiovisual aids and writing instruction were left out of the basic course and placed in elective courses. It then presents a detailed discussion of the topics covered in the 12-week required course, including (1) the structure of the English language; (2) nonverbal language; (3) creative drama and puppetry; (4) the knowledge, skills, and qualities required of a classroom teacher; and (5) choral speaking. Appendixes contain a statement of the role of speech in human society, a speech rating guide, a description of a group activity, a discussion of the speech mechanism, and a chart for judging debates. (FL)

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COMMUNICATION ARTS COURSES IN FACULTIES OF EDUCATION:
WHAT TO LEAVE IN AND WHAT TO TAKE OUT

An Address to the Canadian Communication Association
Halifax, June 1, 1981

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Communication Arts Courses:
What to Leave in and What to Take Out

Introduction

Dr. Samuel Johnson, the great lexicographer, once spoke of "the close and copious vagueness of the English language." The use of the word "communication" in university courses seems to provide an excellent example of this. After studying numerous course outlines, and experimenting with various approaches, I can identify at least four elements which are rarely distinct--they tend to merge into each other.

1. Skills of Speaking

The aims here are to provide students with experience in speaking and listening so as to:

- (a) develop confidence in oral communication,
- (b) enhance listening and speaking ability through guided practice,
- (c) demonstrate the range of situations in which speech is used effectively.

Course content therefore includes the elements of the process of communication, namely the vocal mechanism and relevant exercises in speech formation, breathing and relaxation exercises, reading aloud, group-speaking, group listening.

2. Skills in Group Interaction

The aims here are to help students identify broad patterns of communication and interaction in a classroom (e.g. exposition, recitation, discussion).

Course content therefore includes verbal interaction analysis made familiar by Flanders, Hunter, Amidon, Parsons, etc.; style of the teacher; class-

room climate; dyadic communication, and small group communication.

3. Semantics

The aim here is to study the meaning of words in the context of:

- (a) the growth and development of language historically, and
- (b) the growing child's acquisition of language skills with particular reference to his developing ability to convey meaning accurately and clearly.

Course content therefore includes an overview of theories of how language began, the basic sentence-structure, synchronic and diachronic word-study, contemporary speech-usages, the growth of language skills in children from birth upwards.

4. Audio-Visual Communication

The aim is to introduce students to a variety of modern audio-visual techniques, and the role they play in the process of communication.

Course content therefore includes provision of a background to understanding and use of audio-visual materials of all kinds, ranging from chalk boards, flannel graphs, graphics, to preparation of transparencies, use of overhead projector, film and filmstrip projector, opaque, synchronized slide-cassette, etc.

Individual Approach

I suggest that few tutors, if any, would feel competent to cover all these four aspects of the communication process with equal scholarship and efficiency. Moreover, with the growing pressure upon Faculty of Education timetables (particularly in the cry for longer periods of school practice), some selection becomes necessary. Hence my title: what to leave in and what to take out. What now follows is a record of "one man's road." There may

well be others and better ones.

The Left-Outs

In 1971, the calendar description of U.P.E.I. Communication Arts course read as under:

An introductory course in the practical and theoretical aspects of effective communication. Part of the course will be devoted to the communication process, linguistics, semantics, persuasion and mass media. Students will have the opportunity to utilize a variety of modern audio-visual techniques, in a series of presentations to the class.

After ten years of experimentation, we now have two courses in the area of communication, one being compulsory, the other elective. Broadly speaking, this elective course of three credit hours covers all aspects of "educational technology" or "audio-visual communication."

It is not just a "nuts and bolts" course, however. One exercise associated with use of the overhead projector reads as under:

Overhead Projector:

Brand and model.
How is lamp changed?
Projection lamp code.
Maximum transparency aperture of stage.
Method of focussing lens.
Method of elevating picture on screen.
At what distance will the machine fill a screen 6' wide?
Move the machine as close to the screen as possible while still being able to focus the image. What is the image size?
Location of on-off switch. Does the fan stay on after the machine is switched off?
What is the maximum size of lettering that can be used on the transparency to produce a readable image on a 6' screen for a student 20' from the screen?
Can transparency rolls be used on this machine? How are they mounted?

Now, in view of the clamant demand from the schools for teachers trained in the use of audio-visual equipment, are we wise to make our course an elective one? We think so. Meantime, for students going out on their school

practice, the University Audio-Visual Department offers a basic "familiarization" module. The Faculty of Education encourages students to attend.

One other aspect of Communication Arts which we have shut out of the basic compulsory course is the use of writing skills. Again, we offer an elective course in Instructional Communication which deals with this. Frank Wolfe, of the English Department of Memorial University, Newfoundland, wrote an excellent booklet entitled, "An English Grammar. A Handbook for Teachers," and this is the basic text. It is supplemented with copious handouts on such topics as "The Oral Experience of Literature" (by O.W. Nelson); "The Quality of English Language" (by Clive Sansom); and "Some Integrated English Projects" (by John Smith). Students with an English major usually opt for this, when offered. Students with other majors usually opt for electives in their own methodology area.

The Left-Ins

What is left in is a basic three credit hour course in speaking skills.

The calendar description reads as under:

An introductory course covering both interpersonal and group communication, aimed at teaching the student to think and to express ideas in lucid and well-defined terms. The emphasis will be on the workshop approach involving constant practice in the techniques of voice and speech, public speaking, classroom drama and creative movement. This should encourage in the students a flexible and resourceful attitude and help them to develop self-confidence, together with awareness and sensitivity to a teacher.

Every tutor will have his/her own particular emphases and preferences when offering such a course, and the right to teach the course in his/her own way is a vital part of university autonomy. In my case, I have three goals in mind:

1. to demonstrate students the importance of good spoken English in the communication process

2. to demonstrate language skills in association with appropriately associated skills such as movement, mime, dance, acting.
- 3) to give students opportunities to practise and develop all these skills in harmony.

My course outline changes somewhat year by year as the background of each year's crop of students becomes known. But a typical sample might be as follows:

Week 1	Discussion of the course, procedures, methods of study, methods of evaluation, etc. The nature of language.
Week 2	Individual presentations by students (AV Studio).
Week 3	Group exercises (e.g. "Moon Crisis," "Genetic Screening," etc.)
Week 4	The structure of English language.
Week 5	Non-verbal language.
Week 6	Creative drama, puppetry.
Week 7	Knowledge, skills, qualities required of a teacher in the classroom.
Weeks 8, 9 & 10	Individual presentations. Preparation for and practice in debating.
Week 11	Practice in choral speaking and in dramatization.
Week 12	Revision, individual presentations, and evaluation.

Organization of the Course Content

Week 1. I discuss the course outline, and invite the students to add to or take away, etc. We agree upon evaluation procedures, a sample one being as under:

A. Theory

An examination paper at term end	30	
A folio of written assignments	<u>20</u>	50

B. Practical

A speech or speeches	15	
Debate	15	
Classwork (simulation-exercise, individual/group work)	<u>20</u>	50

We then have a short "getting to know you" exercise where students in pairs introduce each other to the class. All this usually takes an hour of class time.

The other two hours in the first week are devoted to straight lectures providing the language background to the course. Topics (fully illustrated on the overhead projector and blackboard) include "The Nature of the English Language," "Theories of the Origin of Speech," and "Speech in Human Society." An example of a handout is attached as Appendix A.

Finally as a lead-in to week 2, topics for three minute speeches are distributed, though students may also offer their own by agreement.

Week 2. Each student makes a three minute presentation in the Audio-Visual Department studio. This is video-taped and played back. Students evaluate the speeches using a pre-determined marking code. This speech rating guide is attached as Appendix B.

(I evaluate each presentation and each student's evaluation sheets. These latter are then shown to the student as helpful additional critiques to his own self-analysis from the video-tape playback.) I then give a general evaluation, emphasizing such things as the need for variety of pace, pause, and pitch.

Week 3. The group exercises are chosen from the four bio-medical case-studies entitled "The Ethical Challenge" (in the Science and Mankind Sound/Slide Series). They are chosen because they are very topical, appeal to the science students and invariably provoke animated discussion. This is the first time the groups have met, and a group spirit quickly develops. At the same time, the art of persuasive speech is practised in order to achieve consensus (it rarely is achieved--a useful lesson in itself).

The "Moon Crisis" (attached as Appendix C) is my own chosen example of a fairly generic series.

Week 4. These three hours are divided to:

(a) lectures (with lots of questions and answers). Copious use is made of my own transparencies and prepared blackboard work. Topics include "The Growth of Language Skills in Children," "Features of Canadian Spoken English," "The Structure of the English Sentence," and "Changes in Pronunciation."

(b) breathing and relaxation exercises. Practice in memorizing from the spoken word.

Week 5. The students are introduced to non-verbal language, sometimes called kinesics. Synchronized slide presentations demonstrate the use of hands, face and body. Two films are also available, "Street Car" (a Canadian film without words), and "Modern Movement" (a British film showing children 5 to 8 using movement and dance). If time permits, a video-cassette of a lecture demonstration on "Verbal Dynamics" by Christabel Burniston, Director of the English Speaking Board, is also shown.

Discussion groups report on each of their activities through the reporter appointed by the group for each session.

Week 6. Creative drama is broadly interpreted to include a whole series of movement-games, speech-games, activity rhymes, etc. Storytelling round the class is also encouraged. Puppetry is demonstrated by a former student who has an excellent choice of subjects appropriate to the different age-levels in school. Some students in the past have offered short puppet plays as part of their evaluation. On one occasion, a whole class presented "The Wise Men of Gotham" on stage.

Week 7. Students are preparing to go out on school practice about this time, so my lectures centre on classroom performance well supplemented by hand-outs on speech-techniques, such as choice of vocabulary, pronunciation, pace, pause, pitch, volume, resonance, and class contact. Each student presents the first three minutes of a prepared lesson (again, on video-tape in the Audio Visual studio). The other students evaluate.

Weeks 8, 9, and 10. The students are introduced to techniques of debating, my first emphasis being upon audibility and delivery. Vowel and consonant sounds are analysed using the attached graphic (Appendix D). I then outline debate-procedures and debate-judging criteria. Cleve Wall's booklet "Debate" (published by the Atlantic Institute of Education) is excellent value for \$3.00. Every student is required to participate in a mini-debate, topics chosen by the groups with research for affirmative and negative statements done in pairs. The students act as judges using the attached form (Appendix E).

Week 11. Several classes may have begun with relaxation and breathing exercises but here a more sustained effort is made as a prelude to individual and group speaking of prose and verse. Last year was a good year and I was able to form a speech choir with two full evening performances in the university main hall. This last year I put all the students into a stage-version of Oscar Wilde's "The Happy Prince." They did all the publicity work as well as the acting and performed for an audience of 800 in the main Confederation Centre Theatre.

Week 12. Usually a "housekeeping" week with folios being brought up to date (speech outlines, records of group-discussions, individual assignments, reports on other students' speeches). The final examination is also written about this time.

Conclusion

No one is ever completely satisfied with the courses one teaches. The temptation is always strong to wander into too great a detail on the history of language, using Latin and Old English as points of reference (only one school still teaches Latin on Prince Edward Island and our whole Classics Department numbers five to seven students). Children's literature (as distinct from the language children use) is another siren's song to be resisted.

So far, micro-teaching has not been done in any of our methodology classes. If it is, then much of the earlier part of our "Instructional Communications" will have to be revised. There is always a keen desire to go into too great a detail on the structure of the English language. Our English Department has courses listed in the university calendar in this area, and overlapping has to be avoided like the plague (my experience suggests it is the besetting sin of several education courses).

I began with what I thought should be left out. I have dealt with what I at least have left in thus far.

My final thought on what to leave out relates to the theory-oriented written examination. Can some form of oral examination be substituted? One year I tried using an amended version of the General Certificate of Education Examination in Spoken English. It was long, arduous, and difficult to moderate in the later stages. I tried the English Speaking Board Examinations one year, with an External Examiner (Prof. Grace Layman from Memorial University). The results were eminently satisfactory. Only the cost (in terms of student examination fee and examiner's travel costs, etc.) was prohibitive of repeat performances in subsequent years.

So, I ask a question. The International English Speaking Board has

pioneered a universally recognized system of oral examinations in many professions. Could the Canadian Communication Association, in conjunction with the Canadian Speech Association come and do likewise here in Canada?

Speech in Human Society

Since man became man speech has been one of his most valuable assets. Creative thought and many forms of imagination are dependent on creative speech. Speech is not, and never can be, an end in itself. It is a means to a finer, more complete existence for the individual and for the community in which he lives. Speech is not a "subject." It is one of the most potent factors in the development of human beings both emotionally and intellectually. Speech is inseparable from the speaker. It is an expression, whether he knows it or not, of his personality, education, feelings, memories, fears, dislikes, desires.

Speech is a bodily activity. It is a product of the muscular and nervous systems, and is therefore intimately connected with the speaker's health. Vital speech is not likely to come from a devitalized body nor from a morbid nervous system.

Speech is an intellectual activity. Clear thinking is essential to the formation of clear-cut verbal statements by which one mind can communicate with another. The power to reason and to see the flaws in one's own reasoning as well as in others' is necessary to constructive speaking and constructive listening.

Speech is an imaginative activity. Our speaking will lack vitality and the power to create if it is separated from the imagination. Speech without imagination is only half alive.

Speech is an emotional activity. Expression of the emotions, feelings, desires, needs, is a deep-seated inner necessity; and the power to use speech freely and expressively often provides a fine and satisfying fulfilment of these impulses within us. But inner disturbances may produce speech disturbances, and poor voice production may be the result of emotional instability, divided purpose or frustration. The speech worker, then, through trained attention to such speech defects as harshness of tone, lack of rhythm, poor articulation, can sometimes play an important part by discovering the need for treatment under the hands of a qualified psychiatrist.

Speech is an important part of all education. Every teacher, whatever his main subject, should be able to speak simply and clearly to his class. Every child should be encouraged to express himself intelligibly and vitally, and to share his experiences with others. He should be given full opportunity for cooperative and individual exercise of speech in all its forms so that speech may be an integrating and stimulating factor in his development.

SPEECH RATING GUIDE

Suggested Symbols:

1. Excellent (A)
2. Good (B)
3. Adequate (C)
4. Fair (D)
5. Poor (F)

Suggested Use:

Rate each speech according to the criteria at left. Circle the appropriate number. Total and show in square at bottom. Space also provided for letter grade, if one assigned. Indicate speech mode at bottom also, if desired.

TITLE OF SPEECH		Rating	
Content	IDEAS Central idea and purpose significant, clear, properly focused. Ideas adapted to assignment, audience, and occasion.	1 2 3 4 5	
	SUPPORTING MATERIAL Accurate, relevant, and specific detail of interest to audience. Reasoning is sound and meaningful to audience.	1 2 3 4 5	
	ORGANIZATION Unity apparent so there is beginning, middle, end; ideas and supporting material combined for effect. Transitions for unity, Timing.	1 2 3 4 5	Time
Oral Style	LANGUAGE Clear, simple, and unaffected: does not call attention to itself; standard English in natural "oral style."	1 2 3 4 5	
Delivery	POISE AND BODILY ACTIONS Posture, animation, eye contact, Use of gesture and movement effective, natural and not distracting.	1 2 3 4 5	
	VOICE Audible. Well-modulated, free of monotony. Varied in pitch; expresses proper emotional register.	1 2 3 4 5	
	ARTICULATION Speaks clearly, voice unmuffled; precise without pretense; pronunciation is generally acceptable.	1 2 3 4 5	
	Total		Grade
Kind of Speech (Descriptive, narrative, expository, etc.)			

INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS:

Moon CrisisA. Activity:

The following activity requires two groups: (1) a central group of six students, and, (2) a group of observers, presumably composed of the remaining students in the class. After the groups are formed, present the following situation to them:

The shuttle bus was enroute from Lunar Station #2 with six passengers aboard. Its destination was Atlas IV, the spaceship which would return the moon visitors to the planet Earth. Midway through the journey, the left wheels of the bus slipped into a deep rut filled with fine moon dust. The bus slid over on its side and rolled into the depths of a moon crater. Fortunately, none of the passengers was injured. However, they were faced with a situation requiring a life or death decision. Several of the oxygen tanks stored on top of the bus were damaged in the accident. As a result, there was only enough oxygen for two people to continue the journey. The six passengers were faced with the fatal decision, who had the right to go on living and who must stay behind to die upon the cold face of the moon? The radio was smashed and the spaceship was still many miles away--rescuing the four remaining passengers was out of the question.

The group agrees to handle the problem in the following manner: each passenger must tell why he should be one of the two to survive. He must convince the rest of the group that he is worth saving. At the end of the six arguments, the group as a whole must decide which two passengers are worth saving. When the group votes, it is with the understanding that no one can vote for himself. Each person will be allowed two to three minutes in which to state his case. The other passengers are also allowed to ask questions of the person speaking. Before the six passengers make their final two choices, have the observers use a secret ballot to designate their two choices.

The observers can be allowed to participate after the passengers make known their decision. It is interesting to find out if the passenger choices agree with the observers' final choices. A discussion can be built around the effectiveness of each argument--what made one more convincing than the other, etc.

B. Goals:

The activity may be used to develop skills in various areas. For example, it (1) develops problem-solving abilities, (2) introduces students to persuasion, (3) illustrates the use of credibility, (4) develops sensitivity and recognition of the needs of others, and (5) illustrates the need for supporting materials and proper organization.

C. Group Size:

The central group requires six members. The observation group is composed of any number of people.

D. Time Required:

Fifty minutes.

E. Materials Required:

None.

F. Physical Setting:

The smaller group surrounded by the observation group.

G. Process:

Outlined under description of activity.

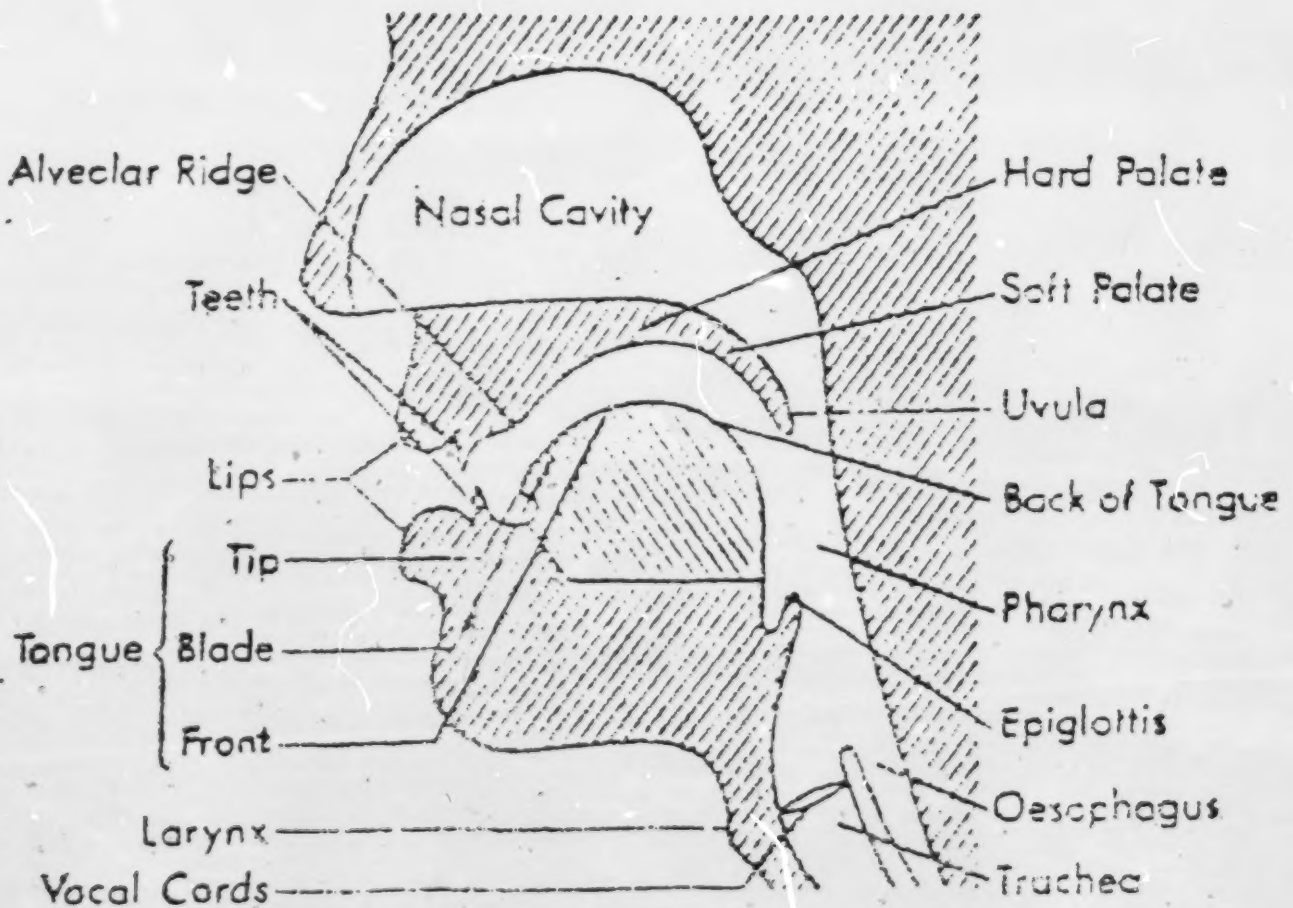
The Mechanism of Speech

The infant is able to produce sounds and tunes from its mouth long before it is able to organize these sounds within any linguistic framework: it is, moreover, capable of hearing and reacting to sounds, and, at an early age, shows considerable powers of mimicry. But it must be remembered that man, in speaking, has imposed habits on certain organs of the body which have quite other primary biological functions; our use of the respiratory tract (lungs, larynx, pharynx, mouth and nasal cavity) for speech must be regarded as a secondary activity of these organs.

Any effective act of speech, learnt by a human being over years of trial and error, is an exceedingly complex operation. The transmission in sound of the simplest concept in the mind involves the setting in motion of a complicated chain of events. The psychological stimulus, conveyed to the organs of speech by the nervous system, activates the lungs, the larynx and the cavities above in such a way that they perform a series of movements which, as we have learned by experience, will have the effect of producing a particular pattern of sound (the articulation stage of speech). These movements of the organs of speech create in the air variations of pressure which will be received by a listener's hearing apparatus. This information is transmitted through the nervous system to the brain, where the linguistic interpretation of the message takes place (the reception stage of communication by speech). The hearing apparatus of the speaker also functions as a mechanism controlling his own speech.

Though the listener's reaction, as well as the speaker's activity, must be taken into account when considering what is linguistically relevant in the sound signals transmitted in speech, the analysis of the sound material of speech will obviously be concerned mainly with the articulatory stage.

ORGANS OF SPEECH



Judging Debaters and DebatesDebate Rating

Round _____ Time _____ Place (Room) _____ Subject _____

(Affirmative)

(Negative)

Instructions to judges: You are requested to rate each speaker on each of the items included on the sheet, assigning the number between 1 and 5 which best describes your evaluation of the speaker's achievement in that function. Superior is 5; Excellent, 4; Good, 3; Standard or Fair, 2; Below Standard, 1.

Individual Ratings

1st Aff. _____

1st Neg. _____

1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
					Analysis					
					Evidence					
					Argument					
					Audience adaptation.....					
					Adaptation to opponents and refuta-					
					Organization.....tion					
					Language					
					Voice and bodily action.....					
					General effectiveness.....					
					Totals.....					

2nd. Aff. _____

2nd Neg. _____

1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
					Analysis					
					Evidence					
					Argument					
					Audience adaptation.....					
					Adaptation to opponents and refuta-					
					Organization.....tion					
					Language					
					Voice and bodily action.....					
					General effectiveness.....					
					Totals.....					

Norms for each performance: Below Standard, 0-12; Fair, 13-20; Good, 21-27; Excellent, 28-35; Superior, 36-45.

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